

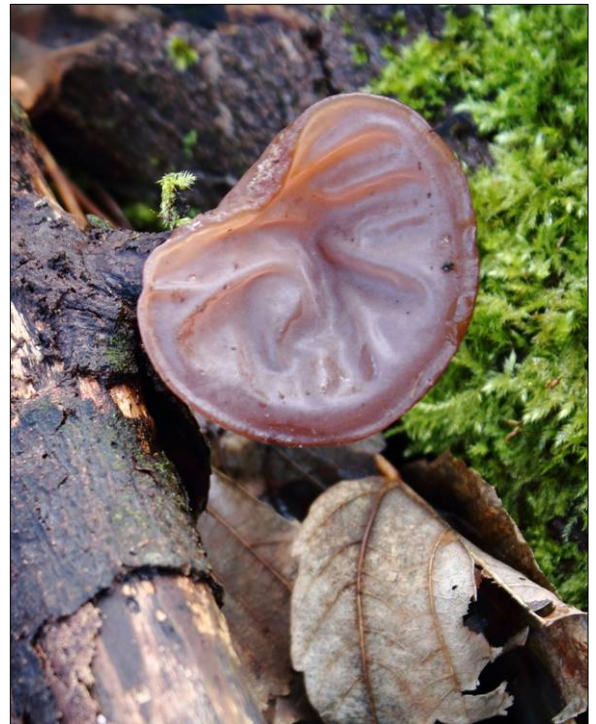
## Fungi Walk at The Walks, Brill Common, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Penny Cullington

11 of us met up on a bright but windy morning for our final outing of the year and gratefully headed straight out of the somewhat exposed and blustery Windmill car park to the shelter of the Walks area nearby. Here as last year we focussed on the many old rotting trunks – mainly either Sweet or Horse Chestnut - supplemented by the plentiful piles of fallen wood. The lack of recent frost meant that the fruit bodies we found were in reasonable nick which made identification that much easier, though several things lacked their normally distinctive smells – something we've quite often observed this late in the season.

We came across plentiful numbers of the late season species *Pseudoclitocybe cyathiformis* (Goblet) – often common at Brill. Greg asked me a sensible question: 'Why *Pseudoclitocybe* when it looks spot on for *Clitocybe* with those decurrent gills?' I answered that though similar in appearance there were microscopic differences but I then had to check later what these were! *Clitocybe* is a tricky genus to determine to species because it lacks the cells on the gill which are so often a help to mycologists. However, I learnt that the two characters which separate the Goblet into a different genus are (a) amyloid spores (those which turn blue when placed in iodine - Melzers reagent: in *Clitocybe* they are hyaline (with no colour change in iodine), and (b) it lacks clamps (knobbles like a dogbone) at all septa – junctions – of its tissue within the flesh: *Clitocybe* virtually always has septa with clamps.

Moving on from such technical stuff to something a bit more mundane, another species we found in abundance today was *Auricularia auricula-judae* (Jelly Ear), sometimes on Elder – its most usual host – but also on fallen trunks of Chestnut and in the log piles where the host identity was unclear but definitely not Elder. One particularly 'earlike' specimen soon had the cameras out.



Above, *Auricularia auricula-judae* in a log pile today (JW)



Fruiting together with five or six other species of fungi on one of the rotting Chestnut trunks was *Flammulina velutipes* (Velvet Shank) – a regular late season species and looking particularly splendid today. It's two for the price of one in Barry's lovely photo here because the corticioid species *Byssomerulius corium* (Netted Crust) happened to be growing adjacent to the mushroom cluster.

Left. *Flammulina velutipes* together with *Byssomerulius corium* on a rotting Horse Chestnut trunk. (BW)



Various specimens of *Mycena* (Bonnet) were found and needed checking at home. Two examples to share with you here, one tiny and single, the other much larger and clustered, though both grow on fallen wood. *Mycena tenerrima* (Frosty Bonnet, more familiar to some as *M. adscendens*) was beautifully captured by Barry showing the reason for its common name; *Mycena inclinata* (Clustered Bonnet) though lacking its typical smell was typically inhabiting an old Oak stump.

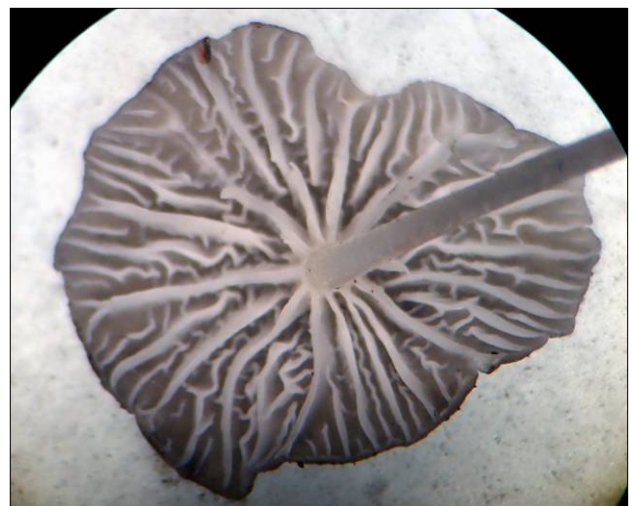
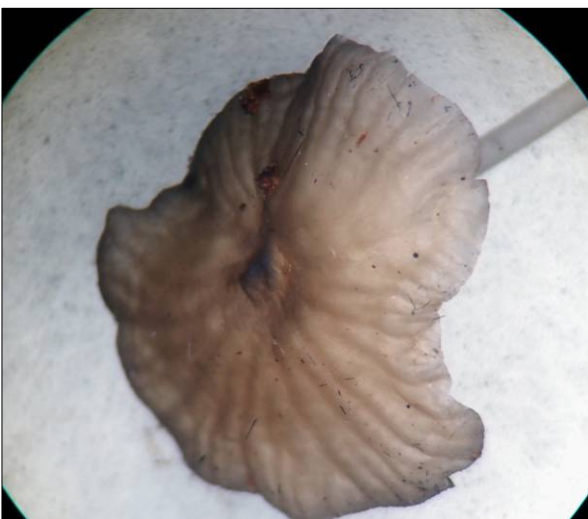


Left, the miniscule and perfectly formed *Mycena tenerrima* found in a log pile today, the cap less than 5mm across. (BW) Below a typical cluster of *Mycena inclinata*, a much bigger species of Bonnet with caps up to 3(4) cm across. (JW)



One Mycenoid specimen I was handed proved well worth checking later and turned out to be not a *Mycena* at all but was *Delicatula integrella* - no common name and new to the site today. The gill formation (see below) alerted me to the fact that it might well be different, and when I then failed to find any typical Mycenoid cells on the gill edge I realised what it must be. There are quite a few *Mycena* look-alikes out there which can really only be safely identified with a microscope, this particular species (the only one of the genus in Britain) by the fact that it lacks cystidia entirely, has strongly amyloid spores and the underside of the cap has low 'veins' rather than gills which are strongly interconnected, almost meshlike. The photos were taken later down my dissecting scope.

Below the unusual *Delicatula integrella*, a small Mycenoid species with distinctive veinlike interconnecting gills, found today growing in a log pile. (PC)





On several of the old rotting trunks we found an interesting and rare ‘pleurotoid’ species (one similar to Oyster mushrooms with decurrent gills and an eccentric stem – growing out of the side of the cap). We recognised the genus as *Lentinellus* at the time through its distinctive very

crowded and ‘saw-edged’ gills, but the species name took Derek some time to determine. It turned out to be *Lentinellus ursinus*, ‘near threatened’ in the 2006 Red Data List and with under 50 UK records though in fact with 2 previous county records. One of these had completely slipped my mind until I looked back in our database to find that Joanna had found here it on a rotting chestnut trunk in 2015 when it was identified by me!



Left, the underside view of *Lentinellus ursinus* having first been extricated from the side of a Chestnut trunk. (JW)

New to the site was *Deconica* (= *Melanotus*) *horizontalis* (Wood Oysterling), found on a stick in one of the log piles. On first glance this could be a species of *Crepidotus* (a genus also having the common name Oysterling) but the seashell-like caps are much darker and browner than in *Crepidotus*, as are the gills and the spores, and the dark eccentric stem tends to be a little more prominent. In most *Crepidotus* species the stem is either insignificant or entirely absent.



Above, an impressive colony of *Deconica horizontalis* growing on the underside of a deciduous stick today (JW) with an insert of a detailed view taken later (DJS).



At one point I noticed on a fallen Oak trunk a row of small whitish Crepidotoid caps, not dissimilar in shape to the *Deconica* above though whitish underneath. Showing it to Derek, he thought it might be *Crepidotus lundellii* and took one home to check - this being a genus one cannot safely name to species in the field. However, it proved much more interesting than that and with work he eventually identified it as ***Clitopilus pinsitus*** – a species in the same genus as *C. prunulus* (The Miller) but with little resemblance to it and with under 60 national records though just a few from Bucks - again mostly determined by Martyn Ainsworth. (When naming an unfamiliar and possibly rare species it is always gratifying to know that someone else with mycological know-how has also recorded it locally.) Unfortunately we have no photo of this to share with you.

To conclude, the most brightly coloured find of the day was undoubtedly ***Leratiomyces ceres*** (Redlead Roundhead), probably more familiar to most as *Stropharia aurantiaca*. (It's quite unusual amongst the many fungal name changes with which we have to become familiar to find one with both the genus and species name entirely changed: this is one such!) This species is an alien invader of woodchip and was new to the country in the 1990s, having since spread rapidly with the increased use of that medium in parks and gardens everywhere. It was yet another species new to the site today.



Right, *Leratiomyces ceres* found by Jackie growing in woody litter today. (JW)

Last year on our visit here we recorded over 60 species, an amazing number for so late in the year. This time though a week or so earlier in December we made it to 50 but of those it was gratifying that so many were new to the site or rare. Thank you to everyone for making it such an enjoyable morning, and particularly to Barry, Justin and Derek for their excellent photos which they kindly sent me thus making the report that much easier to compile. We've sadly reached the end of yet another BFG season. So this is me signing off for the year and I'll be back in touch in the spring when it looks as if things might be kicking off again. Happy Christmas all . . . . .

Photographers: BW = Barry Webb; DJS = Derek Schafer; JW = Justin Warhurst; PC = Penny Cullington.